

Future Female Leaders in Engineering (FFLIE) Program FAQs

General FAQs

How does this program work?

Here's the basic outline:

- LANL provides an 8-week (or longer) summer internship and professional enrichment program during the summers after your junior and senior years in your undergraduate program
- LANL covers the cost of your graduate education through a Master's degree in an engineering field
- While in graduate school, you may work for LANL during the school year (depending on what arrangements are made for your graduate education) and during breaks
- After graduation, you will come back to LANL to start your career as a Female Leader in Engineering!

There is a disclaimer: While it is the Laboratory's intent to offer permanent employment to participants who successfully complete the program, acceptance into the program does not constitute an offer of regular employment, which is subject to the availability of funding and other contractual constraints.

What can I expect in my first year?

If you are accepted into the program, you will be hired as a student intern by a LANL technical organization that has a need for someone with your engineering discipline skills. That organization will assign a technical mentor, who will be responsible for giving you your technical work assignment. You will interact with that person on a weekly, if not daily, basis. The technical host organization also provides your lab or office space and equipment and any needed administrative support.

You will also spend from 2 to 4 hours per week in professional enrichment activities intended to enhance your technical capabilities. This is done in a cohort (involving all the participants in FFLIE in a given year), with two professional development mentors, to help you build a network that will be there to support you as you progress through your career. In the summer of 2016, professional enrichment activities included seminars on Navigating the R&D Engineering Enterprise at LANL, Project and Technical Planning, Technical Writing, and Presentation Skills. There was also a tour of a major LANL facility, a poster session at the Student Symposium, and a networking event with female engineers from around the Laboratory. Most technical host organizations provide tours, seminars, and get-togethers for students, so you should be able to get to know some of your peers through your technical organization as well.

The participants in the program's inaugural year provided extensive feedback on the professional enrichment activities, which is being incorporated into the program you will experience in the summer of 2017! The basic framework will be the same but the materials will be improved and there will be more networking, tours, and social events.

It sounds too good to be true! What's the catch?

There is a catch – if LANL provides your graduate education, you will be expected to work for the Lab for two years after you graduate with your Master's degree or you will have to pay back the tuition. If you leave the program before going to graduate school or if you get your graduate school covered another way (like by winning a scholarship), you'll owe us nothing. We'll be sad if you leave the program, but there will be absolutely no repercussions to you if you do.

What if I want to go on for my PhD?

You may go on for a PhD if your technical host organization agrees, but that is not part of the FFLIE program. In that case, you would be obligated to work one year at the Lab for every year in graduate school.

Why does Los Alamos need a program like FFLIE?

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) needs to improve its retention of mid-career and senior female research and development (R&D) engineers. Recruiting efforts aimed at mid-career women engineers have not been effective in a highly competitive recruiting environment.

As LANL's demographics illustrate, women hired into entry-level R&D engineering positions are twice as likely as men to leave the R&D track for a non-R&D position. This suggests that any intervention to improve the underutilization of women in mid- and senior-level R&D Engineer positions must keep them in the R&D Engineer track long enough for them to attain R&D 3 and higher positions.

To achieve this desired retention of technical women, we have initiated the Future Female Leaders in Engineering (FFLIE) Career Pipeline Program. Retaining the FFLIE participants as a cohort as they progress through their careers and supporting them through their graduate programs will provide them technical and non-technical professional development and a support network of other technical women.

Wasn't there another program like this last year? What happened to it?

This program was launched in 2016 under the name "AWEsome!." Participants were dissatisfied with that name for a variety of reasons and, using their suggestions for more acceptable program names, it was changed to FFLIE for 2017 and beyond. The basic program parameters for FFLIE remain the same as they were for AWEsome!.

Have other questions?

Contact Heidi Hahn (hahn@lanl.gov; 505-665-4606) to get other questions answered.

Application FAQs

How do I apply?

You must apply online at the LANL jobs site: <http://www.lanl.gov/careers/career-options/jobs/index.php> Type in the keywords “Future Female Leaders” to find the most current vacancy posting (IRC#52554).

Be sure to follow the instructions carefully. Incomplete applications will result in disqualification from further consideration for program admission.

When should I apply?

Apply during the academic year in which you will complete 100 credit hours of coursework in an undergraduate engineering program. If you have already completed 100 credit hours in an undergraduate engineering program, apply now.

There is no application deadline. Applications are accepted throughout the academic year, but it is best to apply as early as possible because positions fill quickly!

I am already a UGS at LANL. Do I still need to apply?

Yes. FFLIE is a unique program that has different standards and requirements than the normal UGS program, so you must apply to it specifically.

Eligibility FAQs

What are the program's requirements?

To be eligible for the program, you must be a female undergraduate student majoring in any engineering discipline and must:

- Have completed 100 credit hours of course work prior to the start of the program
- Have at least a 3.5 GPA
- Have an interest in a **career** at LANL
- Be eligible to obtain a security clearance, which usually requires US citizenship

My program is a 5 year program, am I still eligible? I am graduating off cycle (i.e., not in the spring), am I still eligible? I am in a 5 year BS to MS program, am I still eligible? I am starting my graduate school program next fall, am I still eligible?

Yes, you would be eligible in any of these cases (and probably others that we haven't encountered yet!). Your status in the program may be different than what is described in the program description, though, and will have to be tailored to your circumstances. Contact Heidi Hahn (hahn@lanl.gov; 505-665-4606) if you want to discuss your specific situation.

I am a male engineering student (or a female science or math student) in my junior year with an excellent GPA. Can I apply to your program?

No. The program is exclusively geared toward **female engineering** students at this time. There are many other opportunities for you at Los Alamos, though. Consult the Undergraduate Student Programs web site for more information: <http://www.lanl.gov/careers/career-options/student-internships/undergraduate/index.php>

Graduate School FAQs

When you say that graduate school tuition for a MS in engineering will be “covered” what do you mean?

The Laboratory has a number of mechanisms for providing for your graduate education. These include:

- Offsite part-time GRA with tuition reimbursement for a MS program taken in residence
- Onsite part- or full-time GRA with tuition reimbursement for a MS program taken by distance education
- University contract covering tuition and stipend for the student
- Fellowships through GEM (National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Sciences) or NPSC (National Physical Science Consortium)
 - See the GEM website at <http://www.gemfellowship.org/> for a list of participating universities
 - Note that GEM fellowships are only available for underrepresented minorities (Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans)
 - See the NPSC website at <http://npsc.org/Universities/universities.html> for a list of participating universities

Which is right for you depends upon your individual circumstances, the school you select, and the needs and preferences of your technical host organization.

Will I be paid while I am in graduate school?

Yes, each of the options described above includes either a salary or stipend during the school year.

Can I go to any graduate school I choose?

Within limits, yes. The limits are that the school must be in the United States and must offer an engineering MS degree in your intended field of study. Additionally, the program must be ABET accredited (at a minimum at the undergraduate level). Ideally, there will also be a relationship between LANL staff and faculty and/or the school will participate in the NPSC.

Graduate school tuition paid by LANL is capped at \$20K annually. You will be responsible for any costs in excess of \$20K, so that may influence your choice!

Tuition reimbursements in excess of \$5280 annually may be subject to tax withholding under IRS rules.

Salary and Benefits FAQs

How much will I be paid?

The program uses the Student Programs pay scale, which is available at:

<http://www.lanl.gov/careers/career-options/student-internships/undergraduate/undergraduate-salary-structure.php> As you will see from that website, how much you are paid depends on where you are in your academic progression.

Will I receive benefits? If so, what are they?

Yes, you will be eligible for benefits. Your employment status (full- or part-time vs casual) determines what benefits you receive. Full- and part-time students are eligible for health benefits, and vacation and sick leave, among others. Casual status students are only eligible for certain health benefits.

For a complete description of the benefits you will be eligible for, visit:

http://www.lanl.gov/careers/employees-retirees/new-hires/_assets/docs/benefit-plan-eligibility-chart.pdf